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DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: BASHIR PROMISES CEASE-FIRE, DISARMAMENT, COMPENSATION,
DEVELOPMENT, AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH REBELS AT CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE
SUDAN PEOPLE'S INITIATIVE ON DARFUR

REF: A) KHARTOUM 1649

1. (SBU) Summary: At the closing ceremony of the Sudan People's Initiative in Khartoum November 12, President Basher stole the show from the actual SPI document itself by unilaterally promising an "immediate and unconditional" cease-fire, disarmament of militias, compensation for IDPs on an individual and a collective basis, development projects for Darfur, an increase to the number of states in Darfur, and negotiations with rebels to find an urgent political solution to the conflict. There are some major loopholes to the commitments - for example Basher said the cease-fire must have an effective monitoring mechanism - however Basher also made a commitment to empowering UNAMID to carry out its role in keeping peace and security. Notably, Basher did not address the question of a possible vice presidential position for someone from Darfur in his speech, although the SPI document itself lists this as a possible option, to be selected via free and fair election. Eritrean President Afwerki attended and spoke at the ceremony. UN/AU Chief Mediator Bassole spoke and called for an immediate cease-fire, negotiation with rebels, and "concrete actions" on the ground. As expected, the SPI document contains a matrix of options for resolving the dispute, some of which President Basher responded to in his speech. The key next steps are for UNAMID to coordinate a mechanism to monitor the cease-fire, and for Bassole and the Qatari's to engage in shuttle diplomacy to encourage rebel participation at Doha. A date for the Doha talks was not announced at the SPI ceremony; NCP insiders are hinting at early to mid-December but the Qataris and Bassole would be wise to line up key rebel participation and the framework for negotiations before agreeing to this. End summary.

Basher's Commitments

2. (SBU) The "security core" of President Basher's speech consists of an immediate and unconditional cease-fire "provided that an effective monitoring mechanism be put into action and observed by all parties." Basher also promises to begin an immediate campaign to disarm the militias and restrict the use of weapons by the armed forces, to increase police forces to guarantee safe travel and secure routes, and to empower UNAMID to carry out its role effectively.

3. (SBU) The "policies and options core" of Basher's speech lays out the basis for a possible solution to the Darfur crisis, if the government is willing to make good on these commitments:

--confirmation of commitment to negotiations to reach a peaceful solution, as long as the integrity and sovereignty of Sudan are respected;

--increasing the number of states in Darfur after negotiating with the concerned parties and comparing the proposals within two months (this would presumably allow the Fur to have one state where they are the majority);

--approving the principle of individual and collective compensation provided that authorities conduct a "thorough and precise" inventory of the refugees and displaced, taking into account family size and the state's ability to pay - 40 million Sudanese pounds (approx \$20 million USD) to be obligated during 2009;

--providing reasonable services in education, health, and water to all displaced in rural settings;

--approving an immediate cease-fire which is monitored (this is the second time the cease-fire is mentioned), and ceasing negative "media campaigns" for a month to create the right conditions for negotiations;

--forming a committee from the forum to encourage non-signatory movements to take part in peace negotiations (septet provides information on the role the NCP has given Minnie Manawa in this regard);

14. (SBU) President Bashir also promised progress on development projects including: the completing the western highway with the 704 million Sudanese-pound loan (\$350 million USD) from the Chinese; connecting Darfur's three states to the power grid; digging 685

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wells in Darfur with funds from the 2009 budget; constructing 139 primary and secondary schools with funds from the 2009 budget; constructing 45 hospitals and clinics in Darfur from the 2009 budget; rehabilitation of agricultural projects; payment of 73 million Sudanese pounds for water networks in Nyala, El Fasher, and Geneina.

15. (SBU) Bashir addressed the question of justice and social peace by promising a national fund for paying blood money at a sum of 100,000 SDG (\$50,000, so presumably on an individual basis) funded 30 percent by the central government, 10 percent by the states, and the rest by "indigenous administrations and donors" (presumably meaning that the Qataris or other donors will be asked to fund this). Bashir also promised support for tribal reconciliation and the resolution of pending disputes, as well as to support local and tribal administrations in implementing laws.

16. (SBU) In the "foreign affairs core" of his speech, Bashir dedicated himself to improving relations with Sudan's neighbors and noted that Sudan and Chad have just normalized relations by exchanging ambassadors. Bashir also promised to collaborate with the UN and AU to realize peace, and to work with Qatar and the UN/AU Chief Mediator to build on the progress made in the SPI. Bashir also recognized the efforts of those who signed the peace agreement at Abuja, which he said provided a foundation to realize peace and security (a reference to the absent DPA and SLM leader Minni Minawi).

Afwerki, Bassole, and Others

16. (SBU) President Afwerki of Eritrea attended and spoke at the SPI closing ceremony, demonstrating the extent to which relations continue to solidify between Sudan and Eritrea. Afwerki said that although the SPI comes three years late, he welcomed it as an achievement and noted that the Sudan of today is different than the Sudan of 20 years ago (presumably arguing that the Bashir regime has improved and doesn't deserve the scorn of the international community). He urged that the Sudanese be able to conduct dialogue without interference from the international community.

17. (SBU) UN/AU Chief Mediator Bassole spoke and urged an immediate

cease-fire, negotiation with rebels, and "concrete actions" on the ground. Tanzanian President (and current AU Chair) Kikwete's representative called for African solutions to African problems, a stop to an "irrelevant" ICC indictment of President Bashir and declared that Africa does not need outsiders to solve its problems, to great applause. The Sultan of the Fur people, a descendant of Ali Dinar, the last ruler of the independent Sultanate of Darfur, called for the restoration of the native administration.

SPI Matrix of Solutions

18. (SBU) As expected, the SPI document contains a matrix of options for resolving the Darfur crisis. Post will send a summary of the options in outline form via email as the document is over a hundred pages in length. President Bashir responded to - and went further than - most of the recommendations in his speech. For example, on compensation and development President Bashir gave much more specificity in his speech. The key issues of the ceasefire and stopping negative media campaigns are also recommended in the SPI report. The SPI recommends that a Vice Presidential position for someone from Darfur could be an element of a solution to the Darfur conflict, at the President's discretion and decided through an election. President Bashir did not mention this in his speech, presumably leaving this for negotiations with the armed movements.

Comment

19. (SBU) Although the announcement of the cease-fire should be welcomed, as should many other positive elements of the President's speech, we should note that the devil is in the details and in the implementation of the many promises made by the President. We note that the cease-fire appears not to be in effect immediately (despite the clear "immediate and unconditional" phrase used by the President), as a monitoring mechanism must be negotiated first,

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according to President Bashir. We note that several key rebels including JEM/Khalil Ibrahim and SLA/Unity have already rejected the ceasefire. The key next steps are for UNAMID to coordinate a mechanism to monitor the cease-fire, and for Bassole and the Qataris to engage in shuttle diplomacy to encourage rebel participation at Doha and to nail down the specifics of a framework for the talks. A date for the Doha talks was not announced at the SPI ceremony. NCP insiders are hinting at early to mid-December but the Qataris and Bassole would be wise to line up key rebel participation and the framework for negotiations before agreeing to any specific timetable. In summary, there is much to build on from the SPI and especially President Bashir's ambitious and forward-leaning speech, but there is a tremendous amount of work and ambiguity still - and urgent, concrete actions to be taken by the regime and others - for any of this to make a real and positive difference on the ground in Darfur. The Khartoum regime has gone farther than ever before - in rhetoric - towards addressing the key issues in Darfur but nothing has changed - yet.

FERNANDEZ